

Book of Life, *noun phrase*

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ORIGIN: Perhaps a wry transferred use of the biblical *book of life* the record of the names of those inheriting eternal life.

A comprehensive personal identity document, including marriage-, driving-, and firearm-licences. Cf. **ID**. Also *attributive*.

NOTE:

This document was introduced in **1972** initially for whites only (cf. **PASS sense 3**), it was in general use from **1986**

1971 *Sunday Times* 14 Nov. 5 The **six** foolscap-page form which people in South Africa will have to complete for the 'Book of Life' – the Government's new super-identity card – will pry deeply into personal affairs.

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1990 J.G. DAVIS *Land God Made in Anger* 235 All South Africans have to carry the so-called Book-of-Life. An identification document. It contains all the bearer's details, his date and place of birth, his address, his marriage, everything of an official nature that he's done in his life.

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